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elo TOUCHSYSTEMS

TOUCHSOLUTIONS

Alamo Rent-A-Car

OEM
APUnix Computer Services

Software Provider
Travellers Network, Inc.

Application
Traveler Information kiosks

Product
Elo Entuitive CRT touchmonitor with IntelliTouch surface-wave touch technology

Key Benefits
- Intuitive user interface
- Robust, high-quality system for public use
- Reliable, consistent service

"We recommended Elo because of our previous working experience with the company. Based on our experience with Elo's IntelliTouch touchscreens . . . we were convinced it was the right technology to use."

—Sylvia Berens,
APUnix Computer Services
Vice President

Alamo Rent-A-Car is a division of ANC Rental Corporation (Nasdaq: ANCX) that specializes in servicing the leisure traveler—usually a family who vacation infrequently and don't know the area. Alamo launched its Travel Information Kiosks to help these leisure travelers become more familiar with the locale and extend the pleasure of their vacation.

"Alamo is committed to enhancing our customer's experience," says Beth Kaplan, vice president of marketing at Alamo Rent-A-Car. "We want the vacation to begin with the car rental experience. By using the kiosks, customers can learn about local hotels, restaurants and entertainment opportunities, get printed directions, even check a five-day weather forecast—all in a variety of languages, and all by simply touching the screen. We chose a touch interface because it is a clean, direct way that anyone can use. Not everyone is computer proficient. The touch screen makes it easy and fun for our customers."

The first kiosk implementation at Alamo's headquarters in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, became the platform for a nationwide rollout that began in November 1999. In addition to Ft. Lauderdale, kiosks are now on Alamo sites in Miami, Orlando and Jacksonville in Florida, Las Vegas, Nevada and Los Angeles, California. Each location uses between three and six kiosks.

Organized to Simplify Selection

In addition to maps, directions and local amenities, much of the content on Alamo's Travel Information Kiosks is grouped into categories to quickly guide the traveler to the information they seek. Restaurants, for example, are organized by cuisine, and entertainment is organized by type, making it easy for the traveler to select from the comprehensive list of entries. A traveler can also print out directions and a map for each location they wish to visit.

The First Thin-Client Kiosk Deployment

Alamo chose San Diego, California-based APUnix to design and implement the content for its Travel Information Kiosks because of the company's innovative kiosk design and the user configurability of its solutions. Travellers Network Inc. was responsible for obtaining the database content and overseeing the rollout. APUnix provided an opportunity for Alamo to be the first in the market to have a thin client deployment. "This is the first true thin client kiosk powered by a Sun Solaris system," says APUnix'vice president Sylvia Berens, "although the application can reside on any platform, whichever is most appropriate for the customer—thin client, PC or Unix workstation—without changing the software program."

According to Berens, the reason thin client deployment was so interesting to Alamo, and the direction they wanted to go, "is that these kiosks are in places where there are no technical people or anyone to manage the kiosks. They are very much stand-alone. In fact, the Sun Ray Enterprise Internet Appliance used in the kiosk does not even have a disk drive nor does it load the application into memory—all information is downloaded from the central server. We believe that kiosks should not only be both network centric, but also lower the costs of ownership by eliminating the need for administration."

Information is provided in several languages at the touch of a button.

Information Integrated from Six Sources

APUnix'Kiosk Engine is written in Java and integrates information from six different sources to bring content to the Travel Information Kiosk:

1. Database
2. Image
3. Audio
4. Video
5. HTML
6. Java Applets

Each installation includes one kiosk containing a server and then two to five additional kiosks with Sun Ray Enterprise Internet Appliances. The on-site server plays three roles:

- a software server for all the kiosks on site
- a kiosk itself
- a database server

The central server in San Diego updates the kiosk servers on-site at each location daily or weekly. The on-site server in the main kiosk then feeds information to the Sun Ray thin client when a request is made by a traveler using the kiosk.

Choosing Elo TouchSystems, Inc.

"We recommended Elo because of our previous working experience with the company," says Berens. "We used Elo on the 24 kiosks we had placed throughout the city of San Diego in 1998 for Super Bowl XXXI. We also used Elo in kiosks to promote the movie 'Lost in Space'that same year. Based on our experience with Elo's IntelliTouch touchscreens from those two events, we had no trouble with the touchscreens and were convinced it was the right technology to use."

The Alamo Travel Information Kiosks feature an Elo 17" CRT touchmonitor using IntelliTouch surface-wave technology. “We found the touchscreens to be of a robust, high-quality that made them particularly suitable for use in a public access situation by both adults and children,” comments Berens.

Future Plans

APUnix’GUI kiosk development tool makes it easy to make and deploy content changes. The site in Ft. Lauderdale, for example, provides directions to anywhere in the entire U.S. Alamo plans to rollout this feature to the other locations shortly. Alamo also plans to expand functionality by offering promotions to integrate kiosk content more closely with its Web site. Future enhancements to the kiosk will allow travelers to make hotel and dining reservations as well as the ability to make e-commerce purchases at the kiosk itself. A full renovation of the look and feel of the sites will include a retail store and a traveler’s changing area.

“We currently have three new locations being installed—Dallas, San Diego and Boston—and we plan to rollout additional kiosks in the future,” says Kaplan.

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>
> — Beth Kaplan
> Alamo Rent-A-Car
> Vice President, Marketing

Travelers are offered a wide variety of information on local areas.

IntelliTouch Technology

Solid glass and Elo’s patented surface-wave technology are the keys to the superior performance of the IntelliTouch product line.

- Pure-glass touchscreens for superior image clarity, resolution, and light transmission.
- Antiglare glass and anti-vandal options.
- Stable, drift-free operation—for touch response that is always accurate.
- Durable, scratch-resistant glass surface—continues to work if scratched.
- Fast touch response.
- Finger, gloved-hand, and soft-stylus activation.
- Smart touch response—no false touch activation.
- Flat, spherical, and cylindrical touchscreen options for design flexibility.

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